

I Will Build My Church - Matthew 16:13-20
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

To be honest, for a long time the question bothered me. During our journey as a church we have, until now, always held our gatherings in a school, a public place that was not our own. So visitors or those whom I knew would raise the question. They generally meant well, and had been deeply conditioned by the culture. But the question was often cutting, and to be honest, I may have answered out of spite rather than in the Spirit at times. The question, “When will you be getting a church?” I knew what they meant, they were really asking when we would have a building for our church. Still, I had to process the question because it was as if people were telling me that we were not valid as a church until we had a permanent structure that we owned. Meeting in a school is fine for a temporary basis, but to really be a church you need to have a church. Get it. The church is a building with a fixed location, an address, often a steeple. We go to church, and if someone asks where the church is located we can quickly send a pin on Google Maps to let them know how to get to church.

Honestly, this was the most common question I have been asked as pastor of Genesis church over the past 15 years. And my answer was always the same, “The church is not a place, a location, or a meeting. The church is a people redeemed by Christ, gathering as a community on mission.” It is honestly my hope that the years of gathering in a school has driven this truth so deeply in this that we will never forget that the church is the community of the redeemed. You won’t catch people from Genesis teaching their children the old illustration using their hands clasped with the index fingers held up, “Here’s the church, here’s the steeple, open the doors, see all the people.” Nope, the church is never a building.

So here we are after all these years on the cusp of a building project. We have been praying about this for years, asking God to provide a permanent place for our gatherings and events and God has provided a piece of ground, we know He did it. Right now we have engineers, architects, bankers, and a lot of other people working to develop a plan for a building on the site. And we are launching our Rise Up & Build capital campaign encouraging our people to prayerfully consider how they might sacrificially give as part of God’s provision to pay for this building.

But if we are not careful we will start telling people that we are building our church. And if we start saying that it is a sign that we are falling in to a danger. As Jesus was traveling with His disciples around Palestine (the land God had given the Jews centuries before after the Exodus), he took the guys to Caesarea Philippi. This is the furthers north that Jesus ever traveled, about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee at the mouth of the Jordan River at the base of the mountains. Here Jesus asks two important questions of His followers. First, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” They were quick with a myriad of answers, but generally it boiled down to the claim that Jesus was an exceptional man in the line of the great prophets who came before Him. But then Jesus asked, “Who do you say that I am?” By the way, this question is the single most important question you will ever be asked, as your answer will define all of reality. Peter quickly stepped up speaking for the crew, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” What a moment, as for the first time one of the disciples proclaims the true identity of Jesus. He is more than just a great moral teacher, He is God, in the flesh, the promised Christ (Messiah) who has come to rescue His people and rule God’s Kingdom. In the midst of His replies, Jesus tells His disciples something that is so important. He tells them that the proclamation of this declaration is the foundation of

His mission and then says, “Upon this rock **I will build my church.**” The church is Jesus’ idea, and He has promised that He will build His church. In this statement is an incredible promise, nothing can stop the mission of God accomplished in the Gospel and demonstrated in the building of the church. This statement refers, of course, to the church all over the globe. The community of the redeemed is the most diverse and globe encompassing entity on planet earth. Evil dictators and heartless persecution just causes it to grow and spread more, and nothing can stop Jesus from building His church. For a local church it means that they are part of this building as long as they continue worshiping Jesus and proclaiming the glory of Christ and they join in His mission. We are not building a church, but we are building a tool that we hope God will use to help us continue to be a redeemed community of Christ-following people on mission together in our city, to the world, for His glory.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Isaiah 39	Isaiah 40	Isaiah 41	Isaiah 42	Isaiah 43	Isaiah 44	Isaiah 45

Reading from this past week: Matthew 16:13-20

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: James 1

Family Worship

Song - *The Lord My God My Salvation*

<https://youtu.be/RgikQg40ZEw>

Gospel Project

Unit: Into the Wilderness

Story: God gave the 10 Commandments

Big Picture Question: What is worship?

Answer: Worship is celebrating the greatness of God.

Scripture: Exodus 19-20

New City Catechism

Question #2: What is God?

Answer: God is the creator of everyone and everything.

Verse: Psalm 86:8-15

Scripture

Matthew 16:13-20

- When you think of a church, do you tend to think first of its building and location? Why do we do this?
- Who do you say that Jesus is? Why is this question so important?
- What does Jesus mean when He said, “I will build my church?”
- Why can’t the gates of hell stop the building of Christ’s church?

Prayer

*Pray for our prayer emphasis for the Rise Up & Build campaign starting this week.

*Ask God to build His church here at Genesis.